THE QUESTION OF RACE SUPERIORITY

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WE print elsewhere in The Negro World the New York Sun's account of the address of Dr. de Lapoyouge before the Eugenics Congress, at which the famous French anthropologist spoke of the colossal disaster which is rushing towards white civilization. Dr. de Lapoyouge said in the course of his address: "Races may quite easily accept the same language and may change their religions and customs and may be called by the same national name, but they cannot change the shape of their skulls their skin or their character. Anthropological analysis, however reveals the existence of a superior white race and of inferior white races. It is this superior white race which, by virtue of its superior fitness, is now occupying the positions of social responsibility in education, finance, science, religion. We are confronted with the fact that the supplies of petroleum, coal and necessary minerals are limited and the finding of equivalents for these supplies is a task which only the superior race can undertake. The superior race has gone so far toward these equivalents already that we can no longer speak of the atom as indivisible, and in other ways our civilization stands at the edge of infinite development which will require memories even more vast than ever before and intelligences more brilliant if these things are to be controlled."

But more significant were the remarks of Dr. Henry Fairfield Osborn of Columbia University, that education and environment do not greatly alter racial values.

It is certainly unusual to read of a distinguished French scientist speaking of a superior white race and inferior white races and saying nothing about an inferior black race. Perhaps he does not regard the black race as inferior or as insignificant and inconsequential as not to be taken into account.

The question of a superior race is largely a relative question. When we discuss inferior and superior races, we bring in relativity: not the relativity of Einstein, however. Three thousand years ago the Babylonians and Egyptions were powerful and prosperous and regarded themselves as superior, while the Greeks were rude and semi-barbarous. Twenty-five hundred and twenty-four hundred years ago the Greeks had reached the high water mark of civilization and regarded themselves as superior, while the Romans were rude and semi-barbarous. Two thousand years ago the Romans were the conquerors of the world and regarded themselves as superior, while the Britons, Gauls and Germanic tribes were rude and decidedly barbarous. Today the descendants of the erstwhile barbarians and savages are dominating the world, regarding themselves as superior and considering the Zulus, Kaffirs, Basutos, Ba Lula, Ba Lolo, Ba Luba, Ba-Mangwata, the Mandingans, the Krumans, the Senegalese and Vai tribe as rude and decidedly barbarous and of an inferior racial stock. Perhaps five hundred years from now the despised and exploited Africans may be carrying the torch of civilization and deciding who is who in the world.

It will be absolutely impossible in the space of one editorial to adequately discuss the views of Dr. de Lapoyouge and Prof. Osborn. They involve a discussion of the views of Guyot, Buckle, Taine and Prof. Robert De Courcy Ward of Harvard regarding the effect of the climate of the tropics, the temperate zones and the polar zones on man. They involve a discussion of the relative importance of heredity and environment, both psychical and physical, in determining character and conduct, and they involve a discussion of free will and determinism. Whatever affects the individual affects the race, because the race is nothing but an aggregation of individuals.

We believe that Prof. Robert De Courcy Ward of Harvard University undoubtedly summed up the situation when he said on pages 220 and 223 of his book on Climate: "Man's climatic environment affects him in many ways. His clothing, dwellings, food occupations and customs, his physical and mental characteristics, his systems of government, his migrations, his history—all are affected to a greater or less degree. . . . Man moves readily from place to place, from climate to climate. His food, drink, habits, occupations to some extent, his physical and mental characteristics change in consequence. Inheritance, inter-marriage, environment, opportunities, soil and many other factors enter in to determine what changes individual man and the race as a whole shall undergo. Time is a very important element in the final result, for in time a gradual adaptation to new conditions takes place. Climate is but one of many controls, albeit a most important one, for it largely determins what many of the other factors, such as diet, customs and occupations, for example, shall be."

The New York Sun, in an editorial in its reply to Dr. Osborn's statement that the United States is beginning to realize that education and environment do not greatly alter racial values, truly said: "The two million troops which the United States sent to Europe during the World War aroused universal admiration for their splendid physique and vitality. But the tall, muscular, agile American is the product of better living conditions rather than of better racial values."

So it is undoubtedly true that the climate, the air a man breathes, the food he eats, the water he drinks, the amount of exercise in the fresh air his occupation involves, the sanitary condition of the locality in which he lives directly affects his physical stamina, and working through generations affects the physical stamina of a race or nation. The strongest constitution will break under overwork, worry and dissipation. And the most virile race will lose its vitality and energy in a malarial climate.

ENVIRONMENT AND THE NEGRO YOUTH

To read of Prof. Osborn saying that education and environment do not greatly alter racial values, and to read of some of the representatives of the Ku Klux Klan speaking of the inferority of the Negro one would imagine that a human being had fixed, table and unchanging characteristics like wood, coal, stone or iron. But it is not so. A man is a complex personality. He is a product of heredity, environment and the freedom of the mind. The problems his near and remote ancestors faced, the physical, political and social conditions in which they have lived, the way they psychically reacted to opportunities, difficulties, hardships and temptations, and the way he psychically reacts to opportunities, difficulties, hardships and temptations determine what he is today. Heredity partly determines how a man psychically reacts. But the environment also has a reflex psychological reaction upon an individual.

Why did the Germany that produced a Kant, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, Lotze and Paulsen in philosophy, a Schleiermacher and Pfleiderer in theology, a Herder, Lessing, Goethe and Schiller in literature, a Beethoven and Wagner in music, why did the Germany which for over a century made notable contributions to theology, philosophy, psychology, science, medicine, literature, art and music suddenly manifest a blood lust and mania for world domination seven years ago? Sixty years ago Bismarck conceived the idea of welding Germany together by the blood and iron policy. When the Kaiser and Ludendorf were boys and their minds were plastic, when Von Hindenburg and Von Tirpitz were young men, Bismarck was giving Germany a military glory which reached its climax when Count Von Moltke humbled the pride of the proud French people at Sedan. At the same time Treitske was teaching from the classroom that might makes right. Consequently when Kaiser Wilhelm II ascended the throne some thirty-four years ago the storm and stress period had developed the military ideal in him and thousands of other Germans. And when the Kaiser lectured on Germany's great men in Koenigsburg, the home of Immanuel Kant, the man who so revolutionized modern thought that he was called the Copernicus of modern philosophy, the man who said that two things filled him with awe—the starry heavens above and the moral law within, the man whose categorical imperative rang round the world, and did not even mention the name of Kant, the world's greatest metaphysician—it indicated how the teachings of Bismarck and Treitske had transformed the German mind and metamorphosed the German. Undoubtedly the Kaiser was born with a masterful will, an imperial disposition and an impetuous temperament, but the psychic environment of his boyhood, youth and early manhood determined the ideals which his imperial will would set out to realize.

Down in Dixie, and frequently in the North, the Negro is crowded in the unsanitary sections of large cities, earning lower wages than his white brother, and consequently frequently unable to give his wife and babe proper nourishment and medical care, and yet sociologists marvel at the high death rate in large cities. Down in Dixie the Negro youth is taught in school geographies, text books, magazines and newspapers that he belongs to an inferior race. And in order to impress the idea of his inferiority upon him his good Caucasian friends down there disfranchise and jim-crow him, set up the signs "white" and "colored" in railway stations, railway trains, steamships, trolley cars and parks, and they politely ask him to leave town or beat him up if he says that he is a full-fledged man, the same as the Caucasian, and they string him up to the limb of a tree or riddle him with bullets if he has the audacity to sass or strike a white man, regardless of the provocation. Down in Dixie the Negro youth faces an environment cunningly designed to keep him inferior.

Up in the colder North and West the Negro can vote and hold office, is admitted to some restaurants and theatres and can usually get a sleeper or stateroom, but the labor unions have discriminated against him, although they are partially letting him in, and there are some clerical, desk, office and factory jobs barred to him because of his color. Now all of these things have a reflex psychological reaction upon the Negro and breed in him a fatalistic pessimism. In

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America the Negro can only go as far and as fast as the dominant Anglo-Saxon will permit. This inhibits the Negro's initiative, depresses the spirit of adventure and develops in him the watching and waiting attitude. Only the Negro's superabundant vitality, sunny nature, innate optimism, love of music and faith in God prevented his going down under oppression during the past three hundred years which would have crushed most races.

EDUCATION AND RACIAL VALUES

It seems strange to read of as eminent an anthropologist as Prof. Osborn saying that education cannot affect racial values. What transformed the rude, barbarous Germanic and Gallic tribes of two thousand years ago into a race that boasts of its Lloyd George, Lord Balfour, Elihu Root and Secretary of State Hughes, a race that in America evolved the greatest republic known to history and in New York City has developed architecture, bridge building, mechanics and engineering skill to a point never before attained in the evolution of mankind? The Greeco-Roman civilization, the Hebrew Bible, the Christian religion and the Renaissance, the rediscovery of the Greek world, were the civilizing agencies, the educational processes which worked the transformation in tribes which Julius Caesar found savage and barbarous two thousand years ago.

With regard to the transforming effect of education upon the Negro, we can observe the process best not in a Negro born in a civilized country, but in a Negro bred and born in Africa. Adjai Crowther came of the supposedly inferior Yoruba tribe. But he won such renown as a missionary preacher and scholar that the Anglican Church consecrated him as Bishop and Oxford University conferred the D.D. degree upon him. Dr. Oreshatukeh Faduma, a full-blooded African, was bred and born in Sierra Leone. But he graduated from London University, distinguished himself in theology and Hebrew, winning a scholarship in the Yale Divinity School and rendered splendid service as a preacher and educator in North Carolina and is now doing splendid work as an educator in Freetown, Sierra Leone. The father of an African boy in Liberia was a savage, warlike Mohammedan chief. But that boy was recently consecrated in New York City as Bishop Coagitator of the Episcopal Church, with Liberia for his field. In Bishop Crowther, Dr. Faduma and Bishop Gardiner we can see what education can do for the native African.

A race is but an aggregate of individuals. And what education can do for an individual in a few years it can do for a race in the course of centuries. While Dr. de Lapoyouge and Prof. Osborn have won eminence and distinction as scientists and anthropologists, they have something to learn in the realm of psychology and the philosophy of history.

W. H. F.

RACE WAR SEEN IN CLASS CLASH

French Scientist Fears Doom of White Civilization—Calls Fusion "Amiable Dream"—Dr. de Lapouge Presents Views of Eugenics Congress

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"I have put aside my researches in sociology and for fifteen years I have published nothing, and I will publish nothing probably for some time to come," said Dr. G. V. de Lapouge of Poitiers, France, addressing the second international congress of eugenics at the American Museum of Natural History yesterday. "I have consecrated my study," he said, "to the ethnic crisis which is now upon the white race and to the colossal disaster which is rushing toward the white civilization."

Dr. de Lapouge was introduced by Prof. Henry Fairfield Osborne of Columbia University and the American Museum of Natural History, president of the congress. "He is the most distinguished racial anthropologist in France," said Prof. Osborn, and later, after Dr. de Lapouge had finished his address and the applause had subsided, Prof. Osborn added: "This series of incontrovertible facts from Dr. de Lapouge and his great conclusion recall the scene in ancient Nineveh, when on the wall appeared the words 'Mene Mene Tekel Upharsin.'"

"The thought that a number of different races may be mixed and fused quite simply into one uniform race, identical in every way," said Dr. de Lapouge, who spoke in French, "is an amiable dream of the philanthropist who is totally ignorant of anthropology. Races may quite easily accept the same language and may change their religions and customs, and may be called by the same national name, but they cannot change the shape of their skulls, their skin or their character.

Inferior Replacing Superior

"For the millions of years since there have been men and women, racial intermixture by intermarriage has been going on, and the mathematical expectation would be that an infinite gradation of racial characteristics should now be found. This is not true, however. Many characteristics cannot occur in intermediate forms and some can occur only when linked with certain others. Some combinations which do emerge temporarily into existence are eliminated in the struggle for survival.

"Any population now is made up of a number of mixed races, and the race is not necessarily indicated by the nationality of the individual. Anthropological analysis, however, reveals the existence of a superior white race and of inferior white races. It is this superior white race which, by virtue of its superior fitness, is now occupying the positions of social responsibility—in education, finance, science, religion."

This superior race, according to Dr. de Lapouge, is being replaced now by the inferior races through two causes. The inferior races, on the one hand, are content to give their young a short period of feeding and clothing and then to cast them off to shift alone, and, their young being thereby less burdensome, they are permitted to become more numerous. On the other hand, the superior race is restricted by the increasing cost and difficulty of bringing its young to the full development of mental equipment suitable for its race, and therefore the superior race undertakes fewer children, he holds.

Ethnic Crisis Looms

"We are now," continued the speaker, "at the ethnic crisis of the superior race. Two out of three of its young men perished during the war in Europe. Yet we are confronted by the fact that the supplies of petroleum, coal and necessary minerals are limited and the finding of equivalents for these supplies is a task which only the superior race can undertake. The superior race has gone so far toward these equivalents already that we can no longer speak of the atom as indivisible, and in other ways our civilization stands at the edge of infinite development which will require memories even more vast than ever before and intelligences more brilliant if these things are to be controlled.

"Otherwise we may go back to this," he said. He waved toward a painting behind him on the wall of the museum. It represented a landscape in the glacial period.

"The ruins of the great civilizations of the earth," he went on, "stand as a reproach to the elite for having carried a civilization only to where great things were possible. Then it collapsed for lack of the intellectual elements of the superior race.

"Be not mistaken," he warned. "The war of classes is a war of races. There must be more of the superior race. It must be made more abundant. The war has struck a death blow at Europe, but we look with hope and confidence to America to put this theory into effect."—New York Sun, Sept. 28.

DR. FERGUSON.

Dr. Ferguson of the University of Virginia elaborates in an article in the last issue of Current Opinion, upon the inferiority of the Negro. In the beginning he gives forth a reasonably fair premise, but strays away from the line of argument that woud lead to a reasonable conclusion.

He states that groups of Caucasians composed of both classes of the race, would show a greater degree of progress, individually and collectively than groups of Negroes composed of both classes of the race. Now, in the light of conditions reflected from environments, this might be true because of the imposibility to fix a similar status for such classes of the two races. Years of superior advantage in such cases would beyond a shadow of a doubt, give strength to the claim and, in a manner prove the erroneous allegation to be true. The impossibility of selecting the groups as outlined by the good doctor so that the advantage of the test would not rest with the Caucasian groups on account of environment would serve farther to prove his claim. The contentions then, would not stand proven even if the good doctor had studied to close his argument against attack by deeper cause or reason. But this, he failed to do, jumping from the depth of scientific annalysis of his cause to the shoals of lighter thought and accepted theory on his side of the sea.

He acknowledges that the Negro posseses intellect capable of being broadened by training. He tumbles, even from this frank acknowledgement into the common line of expression and states that the capability of the Negro is best shown by his wonderful memory and his aptitude of absorbtion and his power of imitation. He cannot originate, the good doctor thinks and where signs of originality exist, he believes that is found in the Negro possessed of the greatest amount of Caucasian blood. He thinks that there is little of originality and a preponderance of emotionalism in the race and especially, in the full blooded Negro. He fails to employ historic facts to bear out his theory and to strengthen biology and genealogy of races.

The Negro in America succeeds or fails handicapped. He wags, daily, under the burden of general judgment before trial as to his capabilities. He is restrained, naturally, by this truth and does not open up. But he is slowly but surely arousing from this state and is beginning to show tact, cohesiveness and doggedness of determination, the elements which Dr. Ferguson declares that he lacks.

But why linger longer upon baneful declarations? Why not let them hobble on upon the crutches senility until they croak. The age in which they were born is dying and hobbled theory, will surely die with it. Truth catches a passing train of thought and hies away from the fetid breath of a dying age and righteousness pulls the veil of disgust over her face to shut the enormity of it from its sight and ken, while the world rolls on towards a bigger and brighter day.

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BEAUTIFUL WOMEN.

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Professor Frederick Starr, a noted anthropologist, lecturing at the Chicago University to the "co-eds" made a statement which startled his class and caused a great deal of comment throughout the country. He said: "There are no beautiful women in the United States. It is only our American good nature that makes us call a girl that is not phenomenally ugly a pretty girl." The professor then went on to state that the most beautiful women he had seen in all his travels were among the Africans. This latter statement was so astounding that most of the newspaper paragraphers seemed to think that the professo rwas merely joking.

I made a similar statement in these very columns about three years ago. A statement which a good many of my own readers found very hard to swallow. I said that colored women in the rural districts of the South were more beautiful than the white women and that the only reason that we did not realize it was due to the fact that our education had made us almost incapable of seeing human beauty in darker colors.

Some of the papers in New York, however, took Prof. Starr seriously and they invited him to come to New York and take a glance at the parade of feminine beauty that could be seen any day on Fifth Avenue. They assured Prof. Starr that he could see the most beautiful women in America and in the world on Fifth Avenue.

I agree with the New York papers as far as they go, but they should not stop on Fifth Avenue. If they wish to see a more fascinating phase of beauty they should see upper Seventh Avenue. Undoubtedly the prettiest women in America can be found in New York City an dNew York City contains no prettier women than can be found in colored Harlem. Anyone who has attended a large social affair among the colored people in Harlem cannot but agree with the above statement. The color and warmth of beauty at such an affair is something that cannot be approached in any "dead white" gathering.

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